

Integrated health promotion is making a difference

Page contents: [Safe Active Independent Living – SAIL](#) | [What has the integrated health promotion response been?](#) | [What are the impacts?](#) | [What's next?](#) | [Further information](#) | [References](#) | [Previous case studies](#) | [Publish your case study](#)

For Community Health practical examples [click here](#)

A PCP practical example:

Safe Active Independent Living – SAIL

A community based falls prevention project

The Primary Care Partnership, Barwon Primary Care Forum, and participating agencies, have built on a broad range of strategies developed under the SAIL banner. SAIL is a community-based falls prevention program.

As with previous SAIL programs this program targeted older people (aged 65 years and over) within the local community. The funding also provided for innovative program development within hospitals and residential aged care facilities.

To address the needs of older persons at risk, community-based services, acute, and residential programs were developed and integrated to form sustainable service pathways.

Four specific geographic locations were chosen to participate:

- Colac & district
- Apollo Bay & district
- Lorne & district Winchelsea & district

The key stakeholders were:

- Barwon Primary Care Forum
- Colac Area Health
- Otway Health & Community Services
- Lorne Community Hospital
- Hesse Rural Health

The SAIL Project was established in late 2002 following a three-year Foothold on Safety funding grant from the Department of Human Services. This activity provided the impetus for developing partnerships between a number of key people and services to promote falls prevention principles in a more planned and strategic manner across the region.

The Safe, Active and Independent Living (SAIL) slogan encompasses four important elements of falls prevention using language which aimed at resonating a more positive approach with the target population. The four elements of the slogan are:

- Safe - promoting a sense of physical safety and creating safe, supportive environments both at home and in public spaces
- Active – promoting the importance of being physically active each day either through structured or incidental activity

- Independent - promoting the value of being independent, either through staying in one's home as long as one is able, or just being able to undertake tasks without the need for assistance
- Living – promoting a sense of vitality and enjoying ones life

What has been the integrated health promotion response?

The program plan was developed around a set of objectives designed to ensure a multi-strategic, multi-sectoral approach to implementation. Implementation involved project staff working across a number of environments and sectors.

A number of areas were targeted in promoting falls prevention, including:

- Organisational Development
- Raising Awareness
- Risk Assessment in the Community
- Promoting Increased Physical Activity

Organisational Development

Many of the previous activities of SAIL had focused around enhancing partnerships and systems of a single key health service with multiple sites. The Community-Based Falls Prevention Program presented new challenges as it was spread across four distinct health services, each with separate structures and systems. Systems that had proved successful (such as the Foothold on Safety Program) could not simply be transferred and implemented to a new geographic location as they had been in the past.

Strategies

- Development of falls prevention, assessment and management policies and procedures
- Linkage of new tools to existing tools and IT systems
- Involve management in entire process
- Falls being a permanent agenda item for staff meetings
- Include progress in all reporting mechanisms
- Run capacity building workshops

Raising Awareness

Older people don't always respond positively to messages focussed on "falls". It can be perceived as a negative message by many older adults who do not distinguish themselves as being at risk of having a fall. Others may find talking about having falls as a possible threat to their independence and feel concern that they may not be able to continue living in their own home. In recognition of this, there is a continued focus on the positive message of living life to the full encompassed in the SAIL logo and slogan.

Previous SAIL activities had provided some experience working with emergency departments but the move into acute and aged care was new territory for SAIL and perhaps one of the greatest challenges faced throughout the program.

Strategies:

- Use of interactive role play
- Use of local media for promotion
- Create and build on partnerships with local general practitioners, pharmacies and community groups such as senior citizens
- Creation of easy-to-use referral pathways

- Rigorous piloting to ensure that referral, screening, and treatment systems were user friendly

Risk Assessment in the Community

Assessing the falls risk of people in the community requires strong partnerships with other community agencies and a mixture of screening and risk identification methods.

In developing successful partnerships with other agencies – such as general practitioners, Rural Ambulance Victoria and Home & Community Care services - the Community-Based Falls Prevention Program used many of the strategies and tools successfully employed by the Foothold on Safety Program. In designing internal assessment procedures, each of the agencies selected the shorter QuickScreen tool developed by the Prince of Wales Medical Research Institute over the 'SAFE' assessment tool that had been adopted by Geelong based services during the Foothold on Safety Program.

Strategies:

- Promotion of Service Coordination Tool as a means of initial assessment
- Screening and referral procedures across all sectors including aged care, acute, community services, and external organisations such as general practitioners

Promoting Increased Physical Activity

Encouraging increased physical activity through other related programs such as NoFalls has been one of the great successes of the Community-Based Falls Prevention Program. This was in a large part due to the momentum built through work undertaken during the Foothold on Safety Program and the Health Active Living for Seniors (HALS) grant that enabled the expansion of the NoFalls Exercise Program. This success demonstrates the advantages created by integrating a number of programs under the one banner of the SAIL Project.

Strategies:

- Training of staff and volunteers in NoFalls Leader Training to deliver falls prevention programs
- Community based transport utilised to ensure participants attended falls prevention programs
- Links created with local government and recreational facilities

What are the impacts?

- Increased knowledge of the impact of falls for the target population and health service staff
- Increased awareness of services available delivering falls prevention initiatives
- Increased motivation of target group to attend community based exercise programs
- Increased collaboration between related services
- Increased consumer empowerment to continue with falls prevention program
- Implementation of policies and procedures relating to best practice falls prevention, assessment, and management
- Falls prevention initiatives are now part of the local council municipal public health plans

What's next?

- The project will be sustained by allocated people at each site including community health managers, health promotion officers, physiotherapists, nurses and general practitioners
- Ongoing audits of falls prevention procedures will occur to ensure practice is in-line with the quality improvement cycles developed
- The establishment of 'Balance & Beyond' programs will enable older people to sustain and/or increase their level of physical activity, and help to re-engage those who have become inactive
- Continue to investigate options for an evidence-based and validated self-assessment tool, which can empower consumers and potentially increase the likelihood of identifying those at risk before they have a fall
- Offer training of medical practice nurse in community falls risk assessment to implement as part of annual medical review for clients over the age of 65
- Encourage partner agencies to continue with annual falls prevention forums
- Falls prevention resources developed as part of the program will be made available on the updated Barwon Primary Care Forum web site
- Falls prevention education will be incorporate into the induction program for new employees
- Manual Handling Workshops specifically designed to assist clients that are at high risk of falls or who need assistance in getting up from a fall

Further information

For further information contact:

Pauline Maunsell, Manager, Community Services, Colac Area Health Tel: (61 3) 5232 5100

Maria Syzbiak, Director Community Services, Otway health and Community Services on (61 3) 5237 8500

References

- Queensland Health Falls Prevention Best Practice Guidelines